**Week 15- Aquatic Invasive Species Project**

**Conservation Corner**

***Conservation Corner is a regular article produced by the Forest County Land &Water Conservation Department. For more information contact Al Murray, Land&Water Resources Technician at 715-478-1387 or by e-mail at*** ***lcc@co.forest.wi.us******.***

Whether they come in ballast water, on the hulls of recreation boats or from the water of an angler’s bait bucket, many non-native species such as rusty crawfish, zebra mussels, Eurasian water milfoil, and spiny water flea have found their way into Forest County’s waterways. Their presence can cause severe damage to local ecosystems, industry and tourism. As part of a strong partnership of public and private stakeholders Forest County Land Conservation is committed to an effective strategy of prevention, containment and control.

At the last meeting of the Land Conservation Committee a grant application was approved to partner with Lincoln County, Langlade County and Lumberjack Resource and Development Council to re-establish a Tri-County AIS Coordinator to provide assistance across the three county area.

The shared application increases the scope of the project and makes the grant application more competitive on the State scale. Forest, Langlade & Lincoln Counties encompass 2,392 lakes, 1891 miles of rivers/streams, many flowages and more than 300 public access points.  Hopes are for grant funding of a full-time coordinator (with benefits) who will assist the three Counties, residents, and local lake associations in many types of AIS projects with a special focus on education and identification of AIS issues.

At this time, we are looking for letters of commitment and support from Towns, Residents, Lake Associations, and Lake User Groups to locate the 25% required in-kind or cash cost share. In total we need to locate approximately $27,000 of cost share for the grant.

Much work already completed by groups in their current effort can be utilized as cost share. As an example the department just assisted the Forest County Association of Lakes(FCAL) with their letter of support. We found that work completed annually by the association will provide over $13,000 toward the required match. FCAL also voted to donate $3000 toward the grant match if the grant is successful. Thank you FCAL!

Please contact our office if you or your group would like to support the AIS grant. More support for the grant will result in higher ranking of the grant and give us a better chance of getting funding. We would like to show double the amount required.

Also, soon to come on the Land Conservation web tab will be an “Aquatic Invasive Species Tab” which will provide information for water resource users. The Land Conservation tab changes each week with more information for the users of our resources, take a look.